

THE TRIBUNE.

THE SOMERS MUTINY.

Naval Court of Inquiry.

Reported for The Tribune.

SOUTH DAY, SATURDAY, Dec. 31, 1942.

The Court met at 11 o'clock, pursuant to adjournment, and the minutes of yesterday were read by the Judge Advocate.

W. W. WALES was recalled and asked by the Judge Advocate whether since the adjournment he had seen anything material to the case which he had omitted in his testimony yesterday.

He said he omitted to mention yesterday the fact that the vessel first called from New-York by the name of the *U.S.S. Commodore*, and that he had seen the vessel at New-York.

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BY GREELEY & McELRATH.

OFFICE NO. 160 NASSAU-STREET.

FIVE DOLLARS A YEAR.

VOL. II. NO. 228.

NEW-YORK, MONDAY MORNING, JANUARY 2, 1943.

WHOLE NO. 540.

to make it known to the Commander, and did not stay to hear all he had to say. I immediately entered the cabin and mentioned the circumstances. He received it with great coolness—said that the vessel was in good discipline, and expressed his doubts as to the truth of the report. I asked him if I should see Mr. Wales myself and get the information from him. He said no—he did not wish me to do so, or to say anything about it. He assigned no reason at this time for this. He ordered me to keep a strict look out upon Mr. Spencer and the crew generally, which I did. About dinner time I missed Mr. Spencer from the deck. This was about 2 o'clock. I discovered that he was in the fore-top, and immediately went up to see what he was about. He was sitting on the lee side of the top, with his chin resting on his breast—apparently in deep thought. He did not observe me till I had got into the top and was standing erect. He raised his head, and as soon as he discovered me got up and evinced some confusion. He asked me some questions about the rigging, and about the foremast head, which I answered in my usual manner. I think he asked how the lower shrouds answered, (which were fitted differently from the top mast I had known), and something about the top-mast stays. The pennant of the after shroud was fitted with a square spar. I observed to him that, as I came through the steeple, I saw dinner was ready, and asked him if he didn't dine. He said he didn't care about it just then. I came on deck and left him in the top. I should think it was about an hour after that I discovered Green in the top with him. He appeared to be engaged in picking India ink in Spencer's arm. The crew were employed in slinging clean hammocks. I hailed the top and ordered Green to come out. Mr. Spencer put his head over the top-rail, and from his manner I thought he wished Green to remain, though he asked no question. I repeated the order, and then ordered Spencer to send Green and other men that might be in the top on deck. Green came down immediately, but no others. Spencer remained in the top. I had not ordered him to come out. I saw no others in the top. I ordered Green to sling his hammock. He answered that he had done so already. I was engaged in mustering the men for the purpose of having the hammocks stowed. When I got abreast of the Jacob's ladder on the starboard side forward, I observed Mr. Spencer sitting on the ladder. I turned my eye towards him and immediately caught his eye, which he kept staring upon me for more than a minute, with the most infernal expression I have ever seen upon a human face. It satisfied me at once of the man's guilt. As soon as the hammocks were stowed, I reported the circumstances to the commander, and told him that I thought something should be done, in order to secure him. He replied that we would keep a sharp look out—that he did not wish to do anything hastily; and that by evening quarters he would decide what it was best to do. I think it was just before the drum beat to quarters, that he asked me what I would do if I were in his situation as Commander of the vessel. I told him that I would bring that young man aft (alluding to Mr. Spencer) and iron him and keep him on the quarter deck. He told me that that was the course which he intended to pursue; and that he was very glad to find that I agreed with him. The drum beat to quarters, and after the officers' reports were made, he directed me to order all the officers aft except one, which I did—leaving Mr. Hayes forward on the fore-castle. When the officers had assembled aft on the starboard side of the after deck, the commander said to Mr. Spencer, "I understand that you aspire to the command of this vessel. How you are to arrive at it I don't know, unless by walking over my dead body and those of my officers." I think Mr. Spencer said, "No—it's all a joke." The Commander said, "It's a very serious joke, sir, and one which may cost you your life. Do you deny having frequent conversations with Small and Cromwell?" I thought Mr. Spencer appeared confused. He said, "No—it was all a joke." The Commander asked him if he had not a paper concealed in his neck-handkerchief. He replied, "No." His neck-handkerchief was then overhauled, and there was nothing found in it. The Commander then ordered me to iron him. I laid my hand upon his sword, disarmed him, and ordered him to come out from among the officers. He did so and I ordered a seaman doing the duty of armorer to bring up the irons. Mr. Spencer commenced rolling up his sleeves as if to bare his wrist, and was first put in hand-irons. When these were on I asked him if he had arms concealed about him. He said he had not, but perhaps I had better overhaul him, as he supposed I would not believe anything he said. I searched him but found nothing except a few scraps of paper. I think the retreat was then beaten. The Commander ordered me to arm the officers of the deck with two pistols each—and, I think, with cutlasses, though I am not positive. The officer at the fore-castle had one pistol and a cutlass. The orders were, if Mr. Spencer attempted to make his escape or to communicate with any of the crew, to shoot him on the spot. I told Mr. Spencer these orders and the reason for doing so—that he might avoid breaking the rule.

He said he thought it necessary to confine Cromwell. I told him that I agreed with him, and that I believed him to be a dangerous person. My mind had been carried back to many things that had occurred before this thing was known, which I never could account for till the disclosure of this plot; such as Cromwell's absent manner. [This, however, it was thought best to omit for the present.] I was about to hail the top and order him to come down; but the commander told me to wait till he did come down, and then tell him that the Commander wished to see him.

As soon as he came upon the Jacob's ladder I cooked my pistol and pointed it at him, and when he got on deck I told him the Captain wished to see him. When he came to the Captain he was ordered to sit down. The Commander told him, in effect, that there were many suspicions about him, and that he considered it necessary to confine him. He was told by the Commander that he would be confined in the same way with Mr. Spencer, and taken home, where he would be tried by the laws of his country and acquitted if he were innocent; if guilty he would be punished. He replied, "Yes, sir; but I don't know anything about this; I assure you that I don't know anything about it." Something else passed, which I do not at this time recollect. The Commander then said something to me about Small, and asked if I did not think it best to confine him. I told him I thought it was, and he then told me to order him aft. Nearly the same conversation then passed as with Cromwell. The Commander told him he would be confined as the others were, brought home and tried. Small did not deny having had conversation with Spencer. The Captain said to him, "Spencer has talked with you about the plot," in which Small acquiesced and said Yes sir. He did not deny it and made no objection to being confined. The night Spencer was confined I think Small admitted he had talked to him about the mutiny. Small was then confined in irons. All the officers were armed when Cromwell first came down from the rigging; and were stationed about the mast on different parts of the deck ready for action in case of any attack. They wore their arms afterward until their arrival here.

On the 25th or 26th, I think Wilson, McKinley, McKee and Green were confined. Wilson had had a knife in a bag, which he bought on the coast of Africa, and King told me that the night before he had kept it concealed about the guns. I came up and found King and Dickinson talking together. King said to me, "Has Wilson drawn two or three knives from the store-room lately?" I told him none that I knew of. He said, "I heard that he had several knives in his suit bag, and I think it would be a good plan to over-haul it; he has had his bag there at the after part of that gun where Mr. Spencer is, nearly all day, and a knife hid away in the rigging," which he thought he intended to put into the hands of Mr. Spencer. I overhauled the suit-bag, and found no other knife than an African dirk, very sharp, and having the appearance of having been lately sharpened. This is the knife. [It was produced; the blade was about six inches long and an inch and a half wide near the hilt—sharp on both sides and pointed. It had a sheath and a bone handle.] It had the appearance of having been recently sharpened. I was told that there was another knife in the possession of Warner. That was sharp only on one side and curved on the back. I had seen it before. I ordered it brought to me and placed both in the arm-chest for safe keeping.

I think it was at the same time that I said to Dickinson, (King having left), "What do you think of these fellows?" alluding to Spencer, Cromwell and Small. His reply was, that in his opinion "the d—d fool was on the starboard, and the d—d scoundrel (or rascal) on the starboard arm-chest." Small and Cromwell were both on the starboard side, and I said to him, "You mean Cromwell," being pretty well satisfied of the same thing in my own mind. He said, "Yes, sir, he is the most dangerous man on board the ship." I recollect nothing else that happened.

I had several conversations with King, Dickinson, I think Browning, and Anderson, Captain of the fore-castle; and they all thought Cromwell the most dangerous man concerned in the plot. I had several conversations with them every day; and used to ask them what they saw about the vessel. They told me what they had seen—that before the affair they had seen Cromwell talking frequently with Spencer; that they were very intimate, &c. King told me that he thought there was a collection of arms in the store-room. I overhauled it but found none. I then collected all the monkey-tails, holy-stones, marling spikes, and such things as might be used against us. They were locked up in the store-room and otherwise secured. I did not know then that any other of the crew were implicated; but I think it was King who told me that he thought all the other boys were.

After making up the record the Court was adjourned till Tuesday morning at 11 o'clock.

Wife & Putnam have for sale at their Book-store, 101 Broadway, a large and well selected stock of the Works of Standard and Classic Authors; also, in various elegant and durable bindings, suitable for presents, the drawing room table, &c.

Also, a new collection, of every size and variety of binding, of Oxford Bibles.

Among other works of interest and permanent value will be found Hall's British Bibles, illustrated by wood engravings executed in the highest style of the art, from designs by the most eminent artists, every page being embellished with a suitable and appropriate illustration.

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On Marriage—Diogenes to Aristophanes.

Translated for The Tribune.

GREETING: One day, as I was sitting in my tub, meditating, as usual, upon the follies of the world, I was accosted by a young man of Athens, who, with hesitating speech, said, "I have come, Diogenes, to ask thy advice." "Every one is ready to ask advice," said I, "but after receiving it, follows the dictates of his own inclination, even though the oracle of Delphi pointed out the way. But what is it in which your wisdom avails you not at this time?" "I am about to be married," he replied, to the most lovely woman of Greece.

"What," said I, "are there more. Every young fool that has put on Hymen's yoke, since the last Olympiad, has had the best and fairest in all Greece." "Many," he continued, "I have found were mistaken in their opinion; and instead of being the best women have only proved themselves better men than their husbands—ruling them as harshly as Xanthippe did Socrates; and I have come to thee, O Diogenes, to know how I may avoid such a fate." "Nothing easier," said I. "All women, my young friend, expect to find superior valor in man, and when they perceive it not in their husbands, they assume the reins themselves. In domestic concerns there is nothing stirring enough to call out qualities of this kind. But did not you see, on the Pyraeus the other day a battle between a man and his wife, in which some fool interfered to protect the woman; whereupon she immediately gave him such a beating as made him call upon Hercules most lustily, and then turn upon her husband, and soundly pommelled him for not having whipped the other? Begone, now, marry this finest lady in all Greece, if it must be so; and, when you find the sweet moons begin to draw to a close, and indications of a struggle for rule to appear, invite to supper the most lusty and valiant of your acquaintance—one, if possible, who has conquered at the Olympic games, and agree with him to quarrel over your cups, in the presence of your wife. Let your language at first be loud and fierce, and disregard your fair partner's prayers and entreaties; from that proceed to blows, wherein he must allow you, with much show of resistance, to master him completely. His recompense may be that you render him a like service. After this, the word of Diogenes for it, you will rule peaceably among your own household gods." The young man went away satisfied that he had found the secret of domestic happiness.

No politician is considered any thing now-a-days who has not tried both sides. Like a chicken, he must be turned once before he is fit for use.

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